**I’ve made out a Will: Questions**

1. How is this poem like and unlike a sonnet?

*14 Lines, Associates his heart with love. Unlike – Rhyme scheme is not like a Shakespearean sonnet. ABB,CDD,EE,GG,FF – non rhyming end – because rhyme stops. The effect of this is to reinforce that his heart has stopped.*

1. How are lists used in the poem?

*To list the stuff in the body, to create a sense of rhythm. Lists his assets (his body), like a will would.*

1. How are line breaks used effectively?  
   *Gives emphasis to the shorter lines: eg. Last 2 lines. Syntax break-1st line, contradicts itself (how can you leave yourself?)Myself=My body.*
2. How is rhythm used in this poem? Look at regular rhythm, and rhythm breaks.

*Last two lines – his heart stops and the rhythm stops – regular rhythm usually. After “blood” – adds shock value. Last line of the first stanza – “but not the heart, they can leave that alone.”*

1. The poem has a series of vivid metaphors for the different body parts: “jellies”, “tubes”, “syrups” and “glues” suggest different body fluids.

Identify some of the metaphors for body parts. What are they being compared with? What is the effect of these comparisons?

*Compares the body parts to food, inanimate objects, machinery, clocks – made the body parts seem less important, except the heart. Effect – the sum of a human being is more than just the parts.*

1. How far is this poem interesting for what it doesn't say?

*Doesn’t mention the rest of the will (what he’s leaving) only mentions his body. Doesn’t mention other people or why he’s protective of his heart. Possibly doesn’t have anyone else to leave things to? Implying that his body is his most important asset.*

1. Do you think that Armitage speaks for himself here, or as some other person? Why?

*Hasn’t invented a narrator – “I” is an invented character – 1st person pronoun. Sense of ownership – the tone he’s talking in about his heart. Clear in his possession of his heart.*

1. What might be the speaker's reasons for not giving his heart up for transplantation?

*He had given his heart (love) to someone, or it (heart/soul) was the only part of him that made him feel human.*

1. How far does the poem present the human body as a physical mechanism?

*Comparing his body to different physical mechanism, but the human heart cannot be compared to a piece of machinery.*

1. Is the heart valuable because it is the source of physical life (pumping the blood) or because of the things it symbolizes (love, our emotions generally, our vitality)?

*Both aspects are present, but the second is more important.*

**Extra for Experts: See what you make of this!**

“This first line alone, offered in lieu of title, remains perfectly poised even while in the midst of the double act of concurrently inscribing and excising the author. On one side of the caesural ravine, there is the triumph of authorial intentionality. The speaker has "made out a will" - has written, because that is what "made out", in this case, means - and if he has written then he is a writer, and if the writer is present in the poem then the poem is a successful codification of his motives and meaning, and that codification is what the will is supposed to be in the first place. But the other side of the caesura, with its declaration of "I'm leaving myself", contains the ingredients for a complete self-erasure. This is not just a question of the poet's absenting himself from the poem, but of absenting himself from his self. And in such a separation of the author from the author's identity, as is no doubt self-evident, there is no leeway for authorial will at all.”

... And yet there is a sense that the author has left something of his self in the poem, and is also separate from that self, separate enough, at any rate, to make it as much object as subject. It is a poem about its author's body, of course; about his dead body, and so the living speaking subject is bound to be placed in a position from which to objectify himself. But the poem takes that self-reflexive objectification to considerable lengths, deploying similar strategies to those which the Renaissance love lyric uses to control its object. Firstly, the inventorying of the body's parts - so much of an inventorying, in fact, that the collection of parts is denominated as "the whole stock" - recalls the trope of the blazon, referred to here by Shakespeare:

Then in the blazon of sweet beauty's best,   
Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow.(20)

Shakespeare's collection "of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow" suggests that the blazon does not usually trouble itself with the lady's viscera. But in Armitage's case, where the object of the blazon is not some far flung beloved, but his own self, the introspective reflection is perhaps better served with an accumulation of internal organs. Armitage's most sustained use of this inventorying technique occurs in a compendium of forty-two contributions detailing a man's separate physical characteristics, ranging from his headaches to his Adam's apple to his belly button and his ligaments. (21) Here though, where he manages to contain a whole body's worth of gore in fourteen lines, the blazon's evocation of the Renaissance love lyric works particularly powerfully. This is a poem in the middle of whose centremost line is the word "heart". Its fourteen lines gesture towards the sonnet form. Like most of Armitage's gambits after traditional poetic forms, this one is only half hatched. It begins with the octave of the Italian sonnet, but then what would be an Italian sonnet's sestet is divided into the quatrain and couplet of the English sonnet. And although the poem begins with a regular metrical pattern, it is in a kind of anapaestic tetrameter (with the odd iamb thrown in), not iambic pentameter, as the formal sonnet, in general, traditionally is. But even though this is, predominantly, a hybridly structured poem, it nevertheless clearly embraces many of the tropes of the love lyric. And if the writing subject situates himself in the position habitually inhabited by his written object, then it is important to enquire how these tropes reorientate that object.

read the rest at:

<http://www.smithylad.modwest.com/armo/armo_pages/reviews/wobbles3.htm>

**Comparing Poems**

So far, what similarities can you see between the poems you have looked at?

Think about style (use of techniques), voice, tone and theme.